

California Habitat Conservation Planning Coalition

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August 21st, 2013

The Honorable Anthony Rendon, Chair
Assembly Water Parks and Wildlife Committee
1020 N St., Suite 160
Sacramento, California 95814

Re: Water Bond

Dear Chairman Rendon and Committee Members:

Thank you very much for your leadership in moving forward with new water bond language and for reaching out to various interests across the state. We would like to comment on the watershed section.

The California Habitat Conservation Planning Coalition is a statewide organization that includes local government agencies, business interests, and conservation groups dedicated to the success of regional habitat plans which streamline infrastructure and development permitting while conserving landscapes and species on a comprehensive basis.

We hope that the watershed protection section provides at least \$500 million for projects outside the Delta. We also urge the bill language explicitly include Natural Community Conservation Plans (NCCPs) and regional Habitat Conservation Plans (HCPs) as eligible projects.

NCCPs and regional (HCPs) provide large-scale conservation of watersheds. NCCPs by their very nature focus on rivers and streams, as these provide the backbone of wildlife connectivity and ecosystem function. NCCPs protect and restore riparian functions and protect the surrounding watersheds from roads and development that degrade water quality. Several NCCPs and HCPs have a major focus on conserving wetlands and their associated watersheds, such as vernal pool areas. Plans that are being implemented or are under preparation will conserve a total of over 2 million acres of watershed lands.

By building upon regional conservation plans, water bond monies will leverage local and federal contributions, magnifying their effectiveness. Furthermore, as collaborative, multi-stakeholder efforts seated at local governments, these regional programs enjoy unprecedented levels of support and consensus across the public and private sectors.

Thank you for your leadership on the water bond and for considering our views.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Hopkins", written over a horizontal line.

John Hopkins, Ph.D, Director

